

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Bríde
Seoladh na scoile / School address	New Road Clondalkin Dublin 22
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60122D

Date of Evaluation: 13-12-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of school leadership and management
2. Quality of teaching and learning
3. Implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations
4. The school's self-evaluation process and capacity for school improvement

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	03-05 December 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with Board of Management• Meetings with principal and deputy principals• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with parents• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

School context

Coláiste Bríde is an all-girls voluntary secondary school operating under the trusteeship of the Catholic Education in Irish Schools Trust, with a current enrolment of 961 students. The school offers a range of programmes including the Junior Cycle Student Award, Junior Certificate School Programme, optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate (established), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of leadership and management is excellent, a highly effective board of management and senior leadership team promote a culture of care and continuous improvement for staff and students.
- Innovation and creativity in learning is central to this school and is reflected in the development of attractive learning spaces, innovative teaching practices and a very positive student-teacher rapport, all of which support students' engagement with their learning.
- Very effective student care structures are evident; provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) is methodically organised by an outstanding and highly committed core team, however a large number of teachers are delivering SEN additional support.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the majority of lessons was good or very good, with numerous examples of exemplary practice noted.
- The school has very successfully implemented previous inspection recommendations to a high standard, though differentiated teaching methodologies remains an area for development.
- The school's self-evaluation process is of a high quality and there is excellent capacity for improvement throughout the school.

Recommendations

- As a means of consolidating and advancing the very good practice in SEN; reducing the number of teachers involved in providing additional teaching support should be prioritised.
- Teachers should extend their differentiation practices to ensure that all students are adequately supported or challenged to enable them to reach their full potential.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management of the school is of a very high standard.

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leadership for learning and teaching is excellent. A dedicated senior leadership team work in a highly effective collaborative manner and comprises a principal and three deputy principals. Senior leadership members have clear delineation of roles with each member bringing significant key strengths to their respective roles. Commendably, tasks of an administrative nature rotate between deputies, which builds capacity and promotes teamwork.

Each member of the senior leadership team oversees a curricular programme, and supports specific subject departments in planning and development. The three deputies are also responsible for year groups in unison with year heads. The senior leadership team model collaboration and encourage respectful interactions in the exemplary day-to-day management of the school.

The principal and other leaders promote and foster a culture of learning in the school. Senior leadership has overseen the introduction and implementation of strategies that enhance and improve teaching and learning including co-teaching, peer mentoring and classroom observations. A 'pineapple timetable' is available for teachers to offer and select lessons for observation. These highly commendable reflective practices are further enhanced by a subject mentoring programme whereby new staff are supported by colleagues within their subject departments. These collaborative practices enriched by the culture of distributed leadership has potential for improvement within the areas of focus.

A broad and balanced curriculum is in place. Curricular programmes including TY, LCA and LCVP provide students with a range of valuable learning experiences. The TY programme has significant uptake among students. The school has a history of leading and developing curricular innovation, most recently introducing computer science in senior cycle and coding as a short course in junior cycle. Curriculum planning is very good, subjects receive appropriate timetable provision and teacher deployment is in-line with their subject specialisms.

First-year students are offered a core curriculum and a range of optional subjects. The school provides a year-long induction programme for first-years consisting of three weekly timetabled classes. These lessons focus on developing students' skills in the areas of literacy and numeracy, and the development of the junior cycle skills necessary for learning. Evidence based interventions within the programme are informed by diagnostic and competency testing. The programme is delivered by a small core group of teachers, thus enabling expertise and collaboration. This is very good practice.

The wellbeing programme encompasses the subjects of Physical Education, Civic, Social and Political Education, and SPHE, and a range of initiatives including wellbeing week. Class tutors play an important role in the everyday care of students and usually teach the class to which they are assigned, thereby enabling strong relationships with students.

The school operates an academic tracking and monitoring system, identifying low and high performing students. Interventions to support identified students are well established, and are linked to the whole-school reward system.

Student care and support structures are of very good quality. The pastoral care committee meets weekly and targets supports to students in need of assistance. This information is shared appropriately with teachers as necessary. Year heads play a pivotal role in the student-care structures and are supported by the tutor system.

It is clear that the school endeavours to achieve a culture of inclusivity and respect. A SEN core team is in place, with well-qualified personnel who are dedicated to achieving the best outcomes for their students. A comprehensive and thorough SEN policy has been developed in conjunction with high quality support materials and resources for teachers to incorporate into their practice. A range of approaches is in place to support students with SEN, including learning-support classes, small-group mainstream tuition and in-class supports.

Currently, the number of teachers involved in the delivery of resource hours is large, with limited consistency in the deployment of teachers for these students, in particular at senior cycle. In the context of good practice and future development, it is recommended that reducing the number of teachers involved in providing additional teaching support should be prioritised.

Three qualified guidance and counselling teachers provide the service in the school. A ratified Guidance policy is in place that details the aims, objectives and general overview of contact with specific year groups and provision of personal counselling. Going forward it is recommended that the provision plan outline more clearly; student learning outcomes, scheduling and duration of modular class contact with individual year groups, and optional subject selection as both parents' and student questionnaire responses identified this as an area for further development.

Student successes are celebrated throughout the school year, with awards for various achievements such as academic effort, progress, commitment and sporting endeavour. Positive behaviour is recorded using a rewards system, there is scope to further develop the student journal as a means of affirming and encouraging students' endeavours.

Managing the organisation

The board of management is highly effective. The board is correctly constituted and members have accessed appropriate training. The board presented a clear understanding of its roles and outline of their collective responsibilities. The board has developed a range of policies that support the very effective running of the school, all mandatory policies are in place. Policy consultations are inclusive of all partners. A systematic rolling review of policies has been established, cataloguing reviews and ratification dates.

Board meeting minutes document very good attention to the development of teaching practices, teacher continuous professional development (CPD), the school's facilities and curriculum planning. An agreed report is shared with staff and the parents' association after each meeting; this is good practice.

The principal supported by the deputies and middle leadership promote a culture of collaborative review as part of a professional accountability process. A very dedicated middle leadership team undertake duties and responsibilities such as year heads, student welfare promotion and behaviour, academic endeavour, attendance and personal development. The work of the middle leadership team is very effective.

Post holders and others with significant responsibilities report formally to the principal and board of management annually, report documentation reviewed during the evaluation were of high quality, reflective and developmental. Subject department co-ordinators forward detailed certificate examination attainment analyses biannually to the principal.

School management encourage teachers to develop their teaching practice by facilitating and promoting CPD. Commendably subject specific CPD is provided by subject mentors to teachers new to subject departments. Strategic planning for school wide CPD should continue to be based on student need and action research.

Senior leaders are visibly present within the school and operate an open-door policy facilitating open communication and discussion. They meet regularly and are engaged in many of the team meetings that occur throughout the week.

Students' behaviour during the evaluation was observed to be exemplary. The code of behaviour promotes positive behaviour and outlines the responsibilities of students, parents and staff. The ladder of referral is clear, should indiscipline occur.

The building and the surrounding environs are maintained to a high standard. The walls and corridors of the school display evidence of students' high-quality engagement in their learning and in the creation of attractive learning spaces. The school is actively reducing its environmental impact by encouraging recycling, limiting single use plastics and retrofitting LED lighting, the school has attained its eighth Green Flag.

Leading school development

The board and senior leadership are committed to ensuring that the school develops to meet the needs of the students and the school community. The principal manages change in a collaborative and flexible manner. A high-quality guiding vision for the school that supports the schools mission statement and journey towards excellence in teaching, learning and assessment has been developed. The vision identifies ten areas of focus and is communicated in a way that is accessible to the wider school community.

Senior leadership uses the school self-evaluation (SSE) six step process very effectively to lead school developments. A deputy principal is assigned responsibility for leadership and co-ordination of SSE. Teacher questionnaire responses indicate that SSE is used to improve student learning.

The school has recognised the importance and value of developing partnerships with parents as a means of supporting students learning and wellbeing. To this end the school arranges a '*awards night*' as a means of promoting positive parental engagement. The parents' association should consider ways of strengthening its communication with the wider parent community such as a section on the school website.

Commendably teachers and staff provide students with numerous co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities during lunch and after school, including; the '*Learning Hub*', '*Knitting Club*', physical activities, and subject based clubs such as Maths, Science and debating. The school also has a breakfast club and an organic garden.

Very constructive relationships and links have been established and maintained with the local primary schools and a range of relevant agencies. A number of initiatives are in place to promote

positive outcomes for learners, not least the school's involvement with *College for Every Student*. The school has fostered numerous links with third level providers.

Developing leadership capacity

High levels of teacher collaboration was evident in subject planning and classroom practice. Staff regularly engage in professional dialogue in order to develop their practice. There is an increasing culture of self-reflection among staff and a willingness to work collaboratively on areas of practice requiring improvement. School leaders and teachers actively involve themselves in professional associations and demonstrate learning from these engagements in their practice.

The leadership capacity of students is supported by the exceptional volunteerism of staff. A range of groups within the school develop student leadership such as mentors to first-year students, the prefect system, the Green School committee and the democratically elected student council. The student council meets regularly, is representative of all year groups and benefits from the assistance of a teacher. Relevant training is provided to students to support them in undertaking these leadership roles. Student questionnaire responses corroborate that students have a voice in the school. Several other student leadership opportunities are available to students including debating, acting and a range of extra-curricular activities.

The school provides student teacher placements and has an established Droichead induction programme for newly qualified staff. Such engagement in teacher education and induction programmes is welcome and can provide valuable professional benefits to all involved.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learner outcomes and experiences

Overall, learner outcomes and experiences were very good; with further embedding of differentiated teaching practices and formative assessment areas for improvement.

All lessons observed evidenced a very supportive learning environment. Teachers had a very good knowledge of their students. Interactions among students, and between students and teachers, were very respectful and student behaviour was exemplary. Peer learning and peer assessment were a regular feature of lessons, and students co-operated very well with each other. Students were also given opportunities to work collaboratively, as well as working independently in a purposeful manner.

In the best lessons students were supported in sharing their ideas with their peers and engage in exploratory discussion which they clearly enjoyed. Their ability to learn with and from each other encompasses a key junior cycle skill, and should be extended across all year groups and programmes.

The quality of learning was good or very good in the majority of lessons. Learning intentions were shared and used effectively in many lessons to share and gauge levels of learning. However, in some cases, their purpose was interpreted by teachers as a 'to-do' list rather than as a means to involve the students in the learning process and in facilitating purposeful learner engagement.

Highly effective learner outcomes were supported when the learning intentions were differentiated appropriately, phrased simply, and built on students' prior knowledge and skills. There was some evidence in the best lessons that students were using learning intentions to check on their own

learning and this is very good practice and should be further promoted. A range of very good AfL strategies was used in the majority of lessons such as show-me boards, exit slips, traffic lights and reflection sheets and effective use of success criteria was observed in some instances. Expanding on the use of success criteria will further student learning.

Learning tasks and activities that provided an appropriate balance of challenge and support, so that all students could reach their potential, were evident in some lessons but not all. In the highly effective lessons observed, students had opportunities to demonstrate their prior knowledge and to link it with new learning. Often this led to students asking questions and suggesting possible solutions.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

Teaching was very good or good in almost all of the lessons observed.

In the highly effective lessons observed, the planning and sequencing of activities focused consistently on the intended student learning.

Teachers often modelled enthusiasm for their subject and evinced a passion for learning which directly impacted positive student engagement. Individual teacher planning and preparedness was of a high standard across the school. A very good emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary and key words was noted in many lessons which supported students' literacy development.

Learning was of a high standard in lessons where teachers had an acute awareness of their students' needs and adapted the teaching approaches accordingly. This has particular resonance in the context of the mixed-ability cohort in the school. In many lessons, however, a whole-class approach to teaching and learning prevailed, with the same content delivered to all students, in the same way. In planning their lessons, teachers should differentiate learning opportunities to accommodate all students.

Teacher questioning was used to assess students' recall and progress, and, at a more skilful level, to guide and prompt students towards a deeper understanding of topics. This happened when teachers probed students' initial limited responses to stimulate more substantial engagement with the learning, and challenged students to develop their answers, for example by providing a context. Best practice was noted where sufficient wait-time was given and where the questioning was targeted to individuals, rather than global questioning and chorus answering. This allowed for deeper engagement with the learning intentions, and extended the learner experience beyond the lesson.

Highly effective practice was observed when teachers ascertained what the students already knew about a topic, and used that as scaffolding to move their learning forward, differentiating where necessary.

In most lessons, teachers made very good use of oral formative feedback but regular and developmental written feedback in students' copybooks remains an area for development in the school. Building on the whole-school assessment policy at subject department level could be a way of supporting improvement in this area.

Teachers used digital learning technology (DLT) to support teaching and learning in a number of lessons, mainly through visual presentations to frame lessons. However there was scope in some lessons to increase students' use of DLT to further support active learning.

Teacher collaboration is a prioritised area in the school and many teachers have engaged in a range of impressive whole-school initiatives for sharing best practice in teaching and learning such as teach-meets, peer observation and online platforms. This engagement by teachers is commended as it supports the sharing of highly effective practice and enhances the learning experience for all students.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Leadership and Management

There were no recommendations from previous evaluations made in the area of leadership and management.

Teaching and Learning

Very good progress has been made on teaching and learning related recommendations from previous evaluations. Recommendations from previous inspection reports focused on improvements in the areas of subject planning, assessment for learning practices and differentiation. Subject departments and teachers have made very good progress in developing subject planning. Areas that still require school wide further development are differentiated teaching practices and formative assessment.

4. THE SCHOOL'S SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

There has been significant engagement in strategic planning and formulating the school vision 2018-2021. The school are using *Looking at our Schools 2016* framework to underpin their self-evaluation process. School leaders are fully engaged with school self-evaluation and have correctly identified areas for development. The School self-evaluation plan has been developed following consultation with all stakeholders and solid baseline data has been collated and analysed. The process supports improvements and the plan is accessible to the whole-school community through the website.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The school has excellent capacity for improvement. Staff involvement in CPD and sharing of expertise is of a very high standard. There is excellent awareness and strong commitment by school leadership and teachers to continual improvement. Those with leadership responsibilities work very effectively in promoting a common vision for teaching and learning excellence. A culture of self-reflection and review has been established in the school. There is excellent capacity for school improvement.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <i>outstanding</i> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	<i>Good</i> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	<i>Fair</i> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	<i>Weak</i> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management are delighted to receive this excellent WSE Report and congratulate all the members of the school community who were involved. We are delighted to hear about the exemplary behaviour of our students, which reflects the high standards that are expected in the school on a daily basis.

These high standards are also reflected in the commitment and dedication of our teachers, our middle leaders and the excellent senior leadership team who make the vision of our school become a reality. It is most heartening to read about the “exceptional volunteerism” of staff that promotes positive relationships which is a key strength within our school. We are also delighted to see the high praise for the Board of Management’s support for CPD and sharing of best practice and expertise which leads to a culture of self-reflection as outlined in the report.

We thank the members of the Inspectorate for their engagement with everyone throughout the weeks of the inspection and greatly appreciate the positive interactions, the rich feedback and their professional collaboration.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board of Management will continue its’ practice of taking action & making very good progress on recommendations for improvement, as noted by the Inspectorate.

1. We appreciate the acknowledgement of the “very good practice in SEN” and the ‘outstanding team’. As a school we aim to continue this commitment to high standards and excellence within the SEN provision in the school at all levels. The Board of Management along the Principal and Deputy Principals will continue to prioritise this area for staff development, for CPD and will endeavour to recruit more qualified teachers in the direct provision of SEN, however the challenge of current recruitment also has implications in this area. While this recommendation is made, this doesn’t reflect the loss of 3 qualified & experienced teachers from our SEN core team to other schools in the past two years. This reflects the impact of current recruitment challenges and subsequent effect on our provision. It is our aim to rebuild and replenish. Our school has a strong record of releasing staff for further qualifications in SEN and will continue this in order to strengthen our provision and reduce the number of non-specialist teachers in the area of SEN.
2. The Board of Management will support the Principal and Deputy Principals in continuing to prioritise the further development of differentiation practices for all students. It is implicit within our Mission Statement “to nurture the personal, academic and spiritual wellbeing of each student in a caring, inclusive learning environment”. We believe that each student must be adequately supported or challenged to enable them to reach their full potential.

In planning forward, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will continue to keep this recommendation at the forefront of planning for Croke Park Hours, CPD and the creation of working groups to promote collaboration by staff. The continued encouragement of teacher leadership and sharing of expertise in differentiation identified by the Inspectorate in the highly effective classes they observed, will lead to further development.

The Inspectorate clearly highlights the areas of “purposeful learner engagement”, expanding the use of success criteria”, “using learning intentions to check on student learning”, “targeting questioning” and the provision of “formative feedback”. These are areas that the SLT will continue to prioritise so that teachers differentiate learning opportunities to accommodate all students. This will be supported by further development of our bespoke teaching and learning resource handbook.

The Board of Management, along with the Principal shall reflect on the ongoing development of this recommendation via the long established practice of End of Year Reports by subject departments, middle leader reports and ongoing Principal reports to the Board of Management, our trustees CEIST and our Parents’ Council. Where outside expertise and advice can be sought, this will be facilitated by the Board of Management and the SLT.